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Partnership with the non-governmental sector

(Chapter XV of the draft programme of action of the Conference)

Text submitted by the Vice-Chairman (Mr. Lionel Hurst (Antigua and Barbuda)) (Working Group I) on the basis of negotiations held on document A/CONF.171/PC/5

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Chapter XV

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR

A. Local, national and international non-governmental organizations

Basis for action

15.1. As the contribution, real and potential, of non-governmental organizations gains clearer recognition in many countries and at regional and international levels, it is important to affirm its relevance in the context of the preparation and implementation of the present Programme of Action. To address the challenges of population and development effectively, broad and effective partnership is essential between Governments and non-governmental organizations (comprising not-for-profit groups and organizations at the local, national and international levels) to assist in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of population and development objectives and activities.

15.2. Despite widely varying situations in their relationship and interaction with Governments, non-governmental organizations have made and are increasingly making important contributions to both population and development activities at all levels. In many areas of population and development activities, non-governmental groups are already rightly recognized for their comparative advantage in relation to government agencies, because of innovative, flexible and responsive programme design and implementation, including grass-roots participation, and because quite often they are rooted in and interact with constituencies that are poorly served and hard to reach through government channels.

15.3. Non-governmental organizations are important voices of the people, and their associations and networks provide an effective and efficient means of better focusing local and national initiatives and addressing pressing population, environmental, migration and economic and social development concerns.

15.4. Non-governmental organizations are actively involved in the provision of programme and project services in virtually every area of socio-economic development, including the population sector. Many of them have, in a number of countries, a long history of involvement and participation in population-related, particularly family planning, activities. Their strength and credibility lies in the responsible and constructive role they play in society and the support their activities engender from the community as a whole. Formal and informal organizations and networks, including grass-root movements, merit greater recognition at local, national and international levels as valid and valuable partners for the implementation of the present Programme of Action. For such partnerships to develop and thrive, it is necessary for governmental and non-governmental organizations to institute appropriate systems and mechanisms to facilitate constructive dialogue, in the context of national programmes and policies, recognizing their distinct roles, responsibilities and particular capacities.

15.5. The experience, capabilities and expertise of many non-governmental organizations and local community groups in areas of direct relevance to the Programme of Action is acknowledged. Non-governmental organizations, especially sexual and reproductive health, including family planning organizations, women's organizations and immigrant and refugee support advocacy groups, have increased public knowledge and provided educational services to men and women which contribute towards successful implementation of population and development policies. Youth organizations are increasingly becoming effective partners in developing programmes to educate youth on sexual and reproductive health, gender and environmental issues. Other groups, such as organizations of the aged, migrants, organizations of persons with disabilities and informal grass-roots groups, also contribute effectively to the enhancement of programmes for their particular constituencies. These diverse organizations can help in ensuring the quality and relevance of programmes and services to the people they are meant to serve. They should be invited to participate with local, national and international decision-making bodies, including the United Nations system, to ensure effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the present Programme of Action.

15.6. In recognition of the importance of effective partnership, non-governmental organizations are invited to foster coordination, cooperation and communication at the local, national, regional and international levels and with local and national governments, to reinforce their effectiveness as key participants in the implementation of population and development programmes and policies. The involvement of non-governmental organizations should be seen as complementary to the responsibility of Governments to provide full, safe and accessible sexual and reproductive health services. Like Governments, non-governmental organizations should be accountable for their actions and should offer transparency with respect to their services and evaluation procedures.

Objective

15.7. The objective is to promote an effective partnership between all levels of Government and the full range of non-governmental organizations and local community groups, in the discussion and decisions on the design, implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of programmes relating to population, development and environment in accordance with the general policy framework of Governments, taking duly into account the responsibilities and roles of the respective partners.

Actions

15.8. Governments and intergovernmental organizations, in dialogue with non-governmental organizations and local community groups, and in full respect for their autonomy, should integrate them in their decision-making and facilitate the contribution that non-governmental organizations can make at all levels towards finding solutions to population and development concerns and, in particular, to ensure the implementation of the present Programme of Action. Non-governmental organizations should have a key role in national and international development processes.

15.8. bis. Governments should ensure the essential roles and participation of women's organizations in the design and implementation of population and development programmes. Involving women at all levels, especially the managerial level, is critical to meeting the objectives and implementing the present Programme of Action.

15.9. Adequate financial and technical resources and information necessary for the effective participation of non-governmental organizations in the research, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of population and development activities, should, if feasible and if requested, be made available to the non-governmental sector by Governments, intergovernmental organizations, and international financial institutions in a manner that will not compromise their autonomy [and integrity]/[independence]. To ensure transparency, accountability and effective division of labour, these same institutions should make available the necessary information and documents to those non-governmental organizations. International organizations may provide financial and technical assistance to non-governmental organizations in accordance with the laws and regulations of each country.

15.10. Governments and donor countries, including intergovernmental organizations and international financial institutions, should ensure that non-governmental organizations and their networks are able to maintain their autonomy and strengthen their capacity through regular dialogue and consultations, appropriate training and outreach activities, and thus play a greater partnership role at all levels.

15.11. Non-governmental organizations and their networks and local communities should strengthen their interaction with their constituencies, ensure the transparency of their activities, mobilize public opinion, participate in the implementation of population and development programmes and actively contribute to the national, regional and international debate on population and development issues. Governments, where appropriate, should include representation of non-governmental organizations on country delegations to regional and international forums where issues on population and development are discussed.

B. The private sector

Basis for action

15.12. The private, profit-oriented sector plays an important role in social and economic development, including production and delivery of sexual and reproductive health commodities and services, including appropriate education and information relevant to population and development programmes. In a growing number of countries, the private sector has or is developing the financial, managerial and technological capacity to carry out an array of population and development activities in an effective and cost-efficient manner. This experience has laid the groundwork for useful partnerships which the private sector can further develop and expand. Private-sector involvement may assist or supplement but must not mitigate the responsibility of Governments to provide full, safe and accessible reproductive health services to all people. The private sector must be held accountable to all human rights and ethical

standards and principles recognized by the international community and in this Programme of Action.

15.13. Another aspect of the private sector's role is its importance as a partner for economic growth and sustainable development. Through its actions and attitudes, the private sector can make a decisive impact on the quality of life of its employees and often on large segments of society and their attitudes. Experience gained from these programmes is useful to Governments and non-governmental organizations alike in their ongoing efforts to find innovative ways of effectively involving the private sector in population and development programmes. A growing consciousness of corporate responsibilities increasingly is leading private-sector decision makers to search for new ways in which for-profit entities can constructively work with Governments and non-governmental organizations on population and sustainable development issues. By acknowledging the contribution of the private sector, and by seeking more programme areas for mutually beneficial cooperation, Governments and non-governmental organizations alike may strengthen the efficiency of their population and development activities.

Objectives

15.14. The objectives are:

(a) To strengthen the partnership between Governments, international organizations and the private sector in identifying new areas of cooperation;

(b) To promote the role of the private sector in service delivery and in the production and distribution, within each region of the world, of high quality reproductive health and family planning commodities and contraceptives, which are accessible and affordable to low-income sectors of the population.

Actions

15.15. Governments and non-governmental and international organizations should intensify their cooperation with the private, for-profit sector in matters pertaining to population and sustainable development in order to strengthen the contribution of this sector in the implementation of population and development programmes, including the production and delivery of quality contraceptive commodities and services with appropriate information and education, in a socially responsible, culturally sensitive, acceptable and cost-effective manner.

15.16. Non-profit and profit-oriented organizations and their networks should develop mechanisms whereby they can exchange ideas and experiences in the population and development fields with a view to sharing innovative approaches and research and development initiatives. The dissemination of information and research should be a priority.

15.16. bis. Governments are strongly encouraged to set standards for service delivery and review legal, regulatory and import policies to identify and eliminate those policies that unnecessarily prevent or restrict the greater involvement of the private sector in efficient production of sexual and

reproductive health, including family planning and commodities, and in service delivery. Governments, taking into account cultural and social differences, should strongly encourage the private sector to meet its responsibilities regarding consumer information dissemination, particularly on sexual, reproductive and health-related products and services.

15.17. The profit-oriented sector should consider how it might better assist non-profit non-governmental organizations to play a wider role in society through the enhancement or creation of suitable mechanisms to channel financial and other appropriate support to non-governmental organizations and their associations.

15.17. bis. Private-sector employers should continue to devise and implement special programmes that help meet their employees' needs for information, education and reproductive health services, and accommodate their employees' needs to combine work and family responsibilities. Organized health care providers and health insurers are also including family planning and reproductive health services in the package of health benefits they provide.